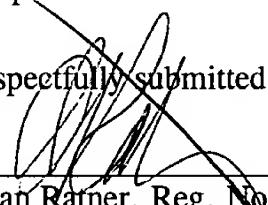


according to the invention over different types of balls which were currently available. As indicated in the Declaration, the balls of the invention compared most favourably over a standard ball provided with a needlefelted outer cover. Moreover, the balls of the invention were found having the same overall quality as a woven fabric covered ball. Woven balls are usually considered by European players to provide better playing qualities than needlefelt ball, therefore this finding was highly unexpected.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Enc - Declaration

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Kathleen Libby

**VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE****IN THE CLAIMS:**

1                    17. (Amended) A felt-covered ball, characterised in that the ball  
2 is covered by a needlefelt produced by ~~the~~ a method as claimed in claim 1 of  
3 forming a felt covering for a ball, characterised by the steps of forming a  
4 needlefelt comprising an entanglement of fibres produced by needling a fibre batt  
5 in a range of angles including a plurality of angles which are non-perpendicular  
6 to the surface of the batt, and cutting or otherwise shaping the needlefelt to form  
7 a blank adapted at least partially to cover a ball.

1                    18. (Amended) A felt-covered ball, characterised in that the ball  
2 is covered by a needlefelt ~~as claimed in claim 4,~~ said needlefelt comprising an  
3 entanglement of fibres formed by the needlefelting of a fibre batt passed through  
4 a needlefelting machine having at least one needleboard providing barbed  
5 needles to penetrate the surface of said batt in a range of angles including a  
6 plurality of angles which are non-perpendicular with respect to the surface of the  
7 batt, and wherein said needlefelt is cut or otherwise shaped to form a blank  
8 adapted at least partially to cover a ball.

Claims 1-13 and 22-25 have been cancelled.